

March 9, 2015

Testimony on SB 1051 - Laura Wolfe, Registrar of Voters, Granby, CT

Good Afternoon,

I am Laura Wolfe, Registrar of Voters, Granby, CT. I have come before you today to talk about the Secretary of State's bill, SB 1051 to improve elections. I urge you in the strongest possible terms to amend or reject this proposal as written. Specifically section 1 of the 174 amendments requested should not be enacted. This section would remove the right of voters in every town in the state to select their town's registrars, replacing them by appointment, and more troubling, it would require that appointment to be for only one Registrar, thus removing the ability of both parties to be represented. It is short sighted to make the leap of logic that because our system isn't working in a few cities and towns, that every town must now give up their two party representation.

In Granby, a town of over 11,000 people, our Registrar's office represent well the can do New England spirit, delivering democracy in a thrifty and efficient manner. Our voting results are always publicly announced on Election night, usually in less than two hours. We track down every discrepancy, work extremely well with our Town Clerk and are blessed with seasoned moderators who are meticulous in documenting each part of the process to ensure our final tallies are accurate. We do all of this with an annual budget of less than forty thousand, that is less than four dollars per person. Make no mistake, I strenuously object to implementing this huge change which has an unknown impact regarding both quality and cost.

My purpose for speaking to you today is this, I am inordinately proud to be part of the election process in the state of Connecticut as it exists today - please do not rush to change it. Nationally when partisan election officials have abused their position because they were acting alone, I feel so blessed to be in the only state that values a balanced and bipartisan approach to elections. I have had wonderful interactions with hundreds of fellow Registrars, who like me, revere and appreciate the opportunity to collaborate and work together. During every election event over the past twelve years I have been doing this, I have always been grateful to work with, and rely on my counterparts to deliver democracy. In our town, we are Registrars out of a sense of civic pride, blessed with the support of both of our town committees. I understand that our state's system is imperfect in execution, but I plead with you to amend this proposal, if you feel it is necessary. Start this change by allowing towns to choose this path by changing their town charter. Then this option can be used by any towns, like Hartford, who feel this option is going to work for them. This bill, as it has been presented here today, must be rejected.

I would like to end on some positive notes. I am delighted that the Secretary of State has proposed some great solutions to some longstanding problems in the election process. I am deeply appreciative of the considerable effort to draft this massive piece of legislation and there is much that we agree upon. Specifically changes to the end of night reporting: immediate

results from the machine tallies publicly noticed and sent electronically to the Secretary of State, having 48 hours to complete the final tally, including hand counts and the rest of the paperwork, requiring results to be amended and reported jointly within 3 days, eliminating the option to send state troopers with a hard copy. These are great ideas that will make for more efficient and accountable results reporting. Requiring standards for holding the office of Registrar, and having the ability to remove those who don't meet those standards will go a long way to restoring trust in our office statewide. I would add that many of these same great ideas on how to improve the election process can be found in the Registrar of Voters' bill HB 6950.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Sincerely, Laura A. Wolfe
Registrar of Voters, Granby, CT

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